A Word from Tim Downs - March

Dear Friends,

On Easter morning many of us will gather for a sunrise service, and as dawn breaks, we will say together "Oh Death where is your victory, Death where is your sting? Thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Ours is a faith of deep promise, a promise that death and brokenness will not have the final word, a promise that life and hope will prevail, and the evidence is that the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty.

One of the joys of my ministry has been the growing relationships we are developing with congregations across the South who are seeking connection with and support from the United Church of Christ. These affiliating churches are the source of much of our vitality as a conference. They are drawn to the United Church of Christ because as we say through the Still Speaking Campaign; "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcomed here." We are a tradition of radical hospitality. The churches which are finding their ways to the UCC often have ministries that have drawn members from other Christian traditions where they have not been fully welcomed. They may have been told that their "difference was deficient." Perhaps they were divorced, or gay, or a woman called to ministry, or even a person of another race. To each of them these churches have said "you are welcomed here." In many of these churches there are boxes of tissues in the pews, because the word of God's acceptance and grace is so powerful, it brings worshippers to tears of gratitude.

In one of the churches that has begun a conversation with us about affiliation; the pastor, speaking of the United Church of Christ, announced "there is somebody out there who wants us!" The congregation burst into applause. Easter reminds us that there is always a "somebody", a God, who wants us. God, who in the words of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith "shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciled the whole creation to its Creator." Easter is the moment in the liturgical calendar when we recall the fullness of the reconciliation we know in Jesus Christ.

On the cross, in the tomb, and then in the dawn of Easter morning, we recall for fullness of God's sacrifice and love. We remember God's triumph over the grip of death and sin, and in the words of Paul we rejoice that "neither life nor death, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!" May your Easter be glorious, and may the light of God's love break forth for you and for all.

Peace,

Tim Downs

Timothy C. Downs | Conference Minister

Oklahoma City church continues legacy of dedicated member

Stephanie Telleen chose to remember Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ in her will when she passed away, leaving her half-million dollar estate to the church. Now the Oklahoma City church will use that estate to remember Telleen for her selflessness and generosity by funding two missions close to her heart.

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« < April 2014 > »

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

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